

Should I Keep Trying to Work It Out?

A Guidebook for
Individuals and
Couples at the
Crossroads of Divorce
(And Before)

Alan J. Hawkins, Ph.D. & Tamara A. Fackrell, J.D.

*Produced on behalf of the Utah Commission on Marriage
Salt Lake City, Utah • October 2009
Dr. Alan Hawkins, Chair • Melanie Reese, Coordinator*

Contents

CHAPTER TITLE	PAGE
Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview	1
A. What is the purpose of this guidebook?	2
B. Why is a divorce orientation education class needed?	4
Exercise for Chapter 1	6
1.1: Plan Your Use of this Guidebook	6
Chapter 2: Can unhappy marriages become happy again? How?	9
A. Can unhappy marriages become happy again?	10
B. Can couples improve their own marriages without outside help? How?	11
C. Are there classes that can help couples have a healthy, happy marriage?	12

Data on Reasons to Delay Divorce

Rev. David Kasbow
Pastor, Metro Detroit Family Church
Family Federation for World Peace & Unification
22021 Memphis Rd.
Warren MI 48091

Comments based on a very helpful guidebook put out by the state of Utah:

Should I Try to Work It Out? A Guidebook for Individuals and Couples at the Crossroads of Divorce (And Before)

From the chapter

Can Unhappy Marriages Become Happy Again? How?

All couples struggle

47% of all married couples have thought at some time that their marriage was in trouble. R. 12

29% said that they had thought of divorce at some time

11% said they had talked about divorce in the last three years.

However

94% who said that their marriage was at one time in trouble were glad that they were still together. R. 13

In one study 10% of couples said they were unhappy in their marriage

15% of these unhappy couples did eventually divorce

85% hung on

Of these 85% two out of three reported being happily married to the same spouse five years later. R.14

Conclusion #1 Holding on to marriage has benefits

The one exception here is where there is abuse (high-conflict) in the marriage. These couples need a way to separate for the safety of all concerned.

From the Chapter

Does Divorce Help Adults Become Happier?

Half of all divorces come from marriages that were not experiencing high levels of conflict. R.121

In general divorce does not lead to a better life. R. 122

Individuals in 2 out of 10 marriages that divorce become generally better off

These are generally the couples who had a high-conflict marriage

Individuals in 3 out of 10 marriages that divorce become generally worse off

Individuals in 4 out of 10 marriage that divorce stay about the same

For many couples conflict actually increases after a divorce. R. 127

- *The emotional response to the divorce
- *Reaction of the children to the divorce
- *Moving households
- *Custody and visitation struggles
- *Child support payments (paying and collecting)
- *Financial struggles
- *Health problems, often greater use of alcohol and drugs
- *New marriages on either side add to conflicts

In three out of four divorced couples, at least one partner had second thoughts about the decision to divorce. R. 131

The divorce rate for second marriages is even higher than it is for first marriages and they break up even faster. R. 139

There is often more conflict in second marriages compared to first marriages. Much of it comes from blending families together. R. 140.

Conclusion #2

The myth that getting out of the conflict results in a happier life is not true. Again, this is the case unless there was a high level of conflict in the relationship.

From the Chapter

What are the Consequences for Children

Children in a high-conflict relationship are better off after the divorce

Children in a low conflict relationship are worse off

Children of divorced parents are 2-3 times more likely to go through a divorce themselves.

Conclusion #3

Unless there is abuse it is better for children if their parents avoid divorce

Recommendation:

Put in place a time period before a divorce can be finalized with requirements to seek some kind of intervention, unless it can be demonstrated that there is abuse in the relationship.

Link to the book, Should I Keep Trying to Work It Out?

<http://divorce.usu.edu/files/uploads/ShouldIKeepTryingtoWorkItOut.pdf>